



L&DL route section: Eskdale Green to Cartmel

Distance: 36 miles (58 kilometres)

Gradient profile:



Overview: The 'journey' offered by this section of the L&DL is one of moving from quite wild and remote upland countryside, characterised by unfenced roads across expansive moorland, through one of the Lake District's least visited yet most picturesque valleys, to the lowland farmland and increased habitation of the Furness peninsulars.

Terrain: A section that includes three quite significant climbs, none particularly high or long, but with steep gradients in places. So don't be afraid to get off and walk! The most significant hills come in the first part of this stretch, enabling riders to enjoy a gentler second half, certainly once you're up the 'Woodland' climb.

L&DL route description *

From the little car park with public toilets in Eskdale Green head in a south-easterly direction, passing The Outward Bound Trust centre on your L. Keep R as you past the King George IV pub, signed 'Ulpha'. After crossing the River Esk this road starts a steady climb up and over Birker Fell. A few steep pitches going both up and down the far side bookend a lovely open road, affording fantastic views across the Scarfells to the north. After a steep descent through some woods, L at the T-jct, signed 'Seathwaite'. Follow this road as it meanders along the Duddon Valley for around 3 km, then R in the hamlet of Hall Dunnerdale, signed 'Broughton Mills'. Another fairly stiff climb follows to cross the Dunnerdale Fells via Kiln Bank Cross. Your efforts are, however, rewarded by a great swoop down to Broughton Mills. A short pull up to the not-very-busy A593, where R, signed 'Broughton', then dropping into the welcoming little town of Broughton-in-Furness, which offers several refreshment opportunities.

From the square in Broughton head south along Market Street, past Keppleway Primary School, signed 'Ulverston'. This road undulates for a while before meeting the A595, where you turn L, signed 'Barrow'. Take the first L after a short distance, where the A595 bears R, onto a minor road just beyond a sizeable layby on the left. This pleasant little road meanders along largely on the level for a couple of kilometres, with the flatlands to your right here known as White and Black Moss, before climbing steeply towards the A593. Just before you meet the A road turn R, to descend another minor road, signed 'Woodland'. Turn R at the next T-jct after around 2 km, signed 'Ulverston'. A little way beyond Woodland Church, just after you have crossed a cattle grid, turn sharp L, signed 'Ulverston'. What follows is a fairly steady climb for a couple of kilometres up Woodland Fell. This unfenced road is a delight, even if a bit of an effort in the uphill direction. It's well worth pausing to take in the views across to the Dunnerdale Fells behind. As you start to descend beyond the summit look out for a minor road jct on the left, just beyond a wooden finger post signed on the right, to 'Hum Gill'. Turn L at the minor jct (unsigned) but keeping to the right hand fork when the road soon splits. Follow this minor road as it undulates across Subberthwaite Common, passes through several gates, then gradually descends to a T-jct adjacent to Lowick Hall. L here, past Lowick Church and the Red Lion pub, then SA at the x-roads with the A5084, signed 'Nibthwaite'. This road soon bears R to follow the River Crake in a southerly direction towards Spark Bridge. L at the T-jct by the bridge that gives the village its name, signed (for



cyclists) 'Ulverston'. This climbs to the Tottlebank x-roads, where SA, signed 'Newby Bridge'. After descending for around a kilometre, take the first turning to the L, signed 'Bouth'. Follow this road past Old Hall Farm and through Bouth village, a little way after which it descends to cross the Rusland Pool, a tidal river that drains the mosses of the lower Rusland Valley. Across the causeway and past Abbots Reading Farm, with its impressive Highland Cattle often on view in adjacent fields. Turn R where the road bends L at Ealinghearth, effectively SA, signed 'Finsthwaite'. Your efforts up the next sharp little incline will be rewarded, at the summit, by lovely views across the Rusland Valley to the left. You'll also pass Hill Top, once owned by Arthur Ransome, most famous for his Swallows and Amazons series of children's stories. SA at an oblique x-roads, then immediately R at an unsigned T-jct. The road descends to cross a bridge over the Lakeside & Haverthwaite Railway, where you may see (or hear) steam trains during the tourist season. R at the T-jct opposite the Swan Hotel, then bear R to cross the River Leven at Newby Bridge. Join the off-road cycle track to the L just beyond the bridge, signed 'Windermere', then use the central refuge to cross the A590 after a short distance, turning L at the far side then first R up a minor road, following cycle route signs to 'Kendal'. Keep R where the road forks near the top of the climb. Follow this little road for some 3 km, taking care at the virtual U-turn where it crosses Black Beck. L at the minor T-jct near Seattle, then R at the next more significant one. SA for around 5 km, past the striking church at Field Broughton, into Cartmel village.

Alternative route from Cartmel to the Rusland Valley, then back via the L&DL

Leave the little square in the centre of Cartmel via the north-west corner, passing the Sticky Toffee Pudding shop on your L. Out of the village past the Racecourse, keep L where the road forks, signed 'Haverthwaite'. Continue on this road for approximately 7 km. For the majority of this distance you will be climbing steadily up Bigland Barrow, to a highpoint adjacent to the access to Bigland Hall. Your efforts will, however, be richly rewarded by spectacular panoramic views across the southern Lake District and a swooping descent to the River Leven at Low Wood. Turn R at the T-jct to cross the River Leven on the B5278, signed 'Ulverston'. Follow the B-road as it winds through the village of Haverthwaite and up to its T-jct with the A590. SA here, into the minor road opposite, signed 'Grizedale'. After a short distance L at the next T-jct, signed 'Bouth', to cross the causeway, then the tidal Rusland Pool, before ascending a little hill into Bouth. R just before the White Hart pub in the village, signed 'Longmire', and follow this minor road for around 3 km as it leaves the settlement, climbs through woods, then becomes a gated road passing the farmsteads of Longmire. Turn R at a T-jct at the bottom of a fairly steep descent, signed 'Grizedale', then take the next R turn after about 1.5 km (unsigned). Keep R at several minor junctions, as this road re-crosses the Rusland Pool beck then passes below the isolated Rusland Church perched above on the left (where Swallows and Amazons author, Arthur Ransome, is buried in the churchyard). Eventually, you'll emerge at a T-jct in the hamlet of Rusland Cross, where R, signed 'Newby Bridge'. Descend to follow the minor road that skirts along the eastern side of the delightful Rusland Valley, with the 'mosses' of Hay Bridge Nature Reserve extending to the west / right, where red deer are not infrequently seen. A little over 2 km from Rusland Cross take an unsigned L fork in the road to climb rather steeply away from the valley to a T-jct at Hill Top (where Arthur Ransome lived for some time). Turn L here, signed 'Finsthwaite', to continue on the L&DL back to Cartmel.

Alternative loop from Broughton into Dunnerdale, making use of the L&DL

This 12 miles (19km) circuit isn't particularly far, but is undulating enough to stretch your legs. It's certainly long enough to make a good half-day, or even day's, outing if you linger to enjoy the delights of Dunnerdale, maybe taking in one or both of the suggested detours outlined in the route description below: to the viewpoint on top of Stickle Pike and / or to enjoy the warm welcome afforded by the New Field Inn at Seathwaite.

From Broughton Square take the road heading north-west beside the Square Café, signed 'Coniston'. This road climbs gently for 2 km to Lower Hawthwaite where you turn L, signed 'Broughton Mills'. Descend to Broughton Mills and continue on this road as it twists and turns through the village before climbing, quite steeply in places, for 3km to Kiln Bank Cross, here leaving the enclosed fields for more open fell scenery. At the top of the climb the road passes



between Stickle Pike on the left and Caw on the right, with a grand view across Dunnerdale to Harter Fell ahead. (The summit of Stickle Pike is about 20 minutes walk from here). The descent into Dunnerdale is steep and you'll need to control your speed all the way. You may want to pause on the way down and take in the views of Dunnerdale, with its native deciduous woodland rising steeply from the valley floor. Turn L after around 2.5km by a bridge over the River Duddon, signed 'Broughton via Duddon Valley'. (A detour for refreshments worth considering here would be R, signed 'Seathwaite', to reach the New Field Inn in 1.5km). Back on the main loop, continue south along the valley bottom, through the scattered village of Ulpha, crossing the River Duddon then climbing gently up the side of the valley with dramatic crags on your left. About nearly 4km from Ulpha, the road descends steeply back to the valley floor and on to a T-jct with the A595. Turn L, signed 'Broughton'. After a short steep climb to the High Cross Inn bear L off the main road (effectively SA at a x-roads), signed 'Broughton' to descend into this little town again via a road with speed bumps.

[Note that the summaries below relate to the L&DL and do not include the alternative loops.]

Scenic highlights: The open road across Birker Fell, the splendid isolation and majestic beauty of Dunnerdale.

Points of interest: The compact quaintness of the little town of Broughton in Furness; Haverthwaite and Lakeside Steam Railway (just off the route); Lakeland Motor Museum (just off the route); the historic bridge over the River Leven at Newby Bridge; the village of Cartmel, including its Priory, Racecourse and Sticky Toffee Pudding shop.

Refreshments: Eskdale Green (various pubs and a café in the vicinity), Hazel Head Farm (seasonal cafe), Ulpha (village shop), Broughton Mills (pub), Broughton (several cafes and pubs), Lowick (pub), Spark Bridge (two pubs), Bouth (pub and seasonal tea shop at Old Hall Farm), Newby Bridge (two pubs), Cartmel (several cafes, pubs and restaurants).

Accommodation: Eskdale Green (B&Bs, camping), Broughton (B&Bs), Cartmel (B&Bs, boutique hotels, camping).

* Key to route descriptions

R	=	right
L	=	left
SA	=	straight ahead / across
T-jct / jct	=	T-junction / junction
x-roads	=	crossroads
m	=	metres
km	=	kilometres